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ABSTRACT

Parent training as a service delivery model for 12-month programming is discussed. Legislation, litigation, and research concerning 12-month programming and parents as program implementers for handicapped students are reviewed. A parent training program is described, and results of a study using the program as a 12-month service delivery model showed less regression, shorter recoupment time, and increased skill levels for handicapped students over the summer break in programming. Comparison with students who did not have 12 month service delivery indicated more regression, a longer recoupment time, and fewer increases in skill levels.
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Parent Training

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Parent Training as a Service
Delivery Model for 12
Month Programming
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Abstract

Parent training as a service delivery model for 12 month programming is discussed. Legislation, litigation, and literature regarding 12 month programming and parents as program implementers for handicapped students are reviewed. A parent training program is described. Results of a study using this training program as a 12 month service delivery model for handicapped students showed less regression, a shorter recoupment time, and increased skill levels over the summer break in programming. Comparison with students who did not have 12 month service delivery indicated more regression, a longer recoupment time, and fewer increases in skill levels.

Parent Training as a Service

Delivery Model for 12

Month Programming

A free appropriate public education for all handicapped children, the basic mandate of PL 94-142, has created much educational controversy since its enactment in 1975. Many questions have arisen as to its definition, and the courts have been called upon in an effort to clarify its meaning.

One major area in which issues requiring clarification have resulted in several lawsuits has been whether or not school districts can refuse to provide severely and profoundly retarded children a free publicly funded education in excess of 180 days without violating the constitutional and statutory rights of the child. Federal courts have held that states violate PL 94-142 when they limit special education programs to a 180 day maximum. School systems are now being required to extend the school year beyond the traditional 180 days. As a result state and local school systems have been caught up in an atmosphere of confusion surrounded by such questions as funding sources, models for service delivery, and determination of individual need. In regards to the latter regression-recoupment has appeared in much of the legislation as the key to determining eligibility for schooling in excess of 180 days.

Regardless of the court cases, the controversy, and the varying opinions educators do not wish to see regression in a

student nor do they wish to see anything but a short recoupment time if there must be one at all. We must look at studies such as those of Bahling (note 1), Edgar, Spence, and Kenowitz (1977), and Larsen, Goodman, and Glean (1981) and investigate ways of insuring students will not show a regression-recoupment disability but rather will maintain June skill levels and transfer and generalize these skills to the home and community environments.

In attempting to find an answer to the question of 12 month programming parent training should be considered as a possible model for service delivery. Parent involvement is already mandated by PL 94-142, but this participation is oftentimes passive and misunderstood. Parent participation should not be passive, but rather the parent should be viewed as an active member of the educational team and ideally share the responsibility of providing an appropriate education to the handicapped child. The purpose of this paper is to describe a program of parent training used as a 12 month service delivery model and the results of a study over a 2 year period from 1981 to 1983 using this training as its basis.

The hypothesis of this study centers around the assumption that moderately and severely handicapped students progress best when parents are actively involved in the education process and that properly trained parents can bring about significant progress in their child's development; therefore, a structured

planned program of parent training as a service delivery model for 12 month programming should reduce regression over the summer break in programming, reduce regression-recoupment time in the fall, and, in some cases, increase skill levels over those of June. Extending this hypothesis a comparison among students of regression and regression-recoupment time should reveal that students with trained parents show less regression, a shorter regression-recoupment time, and gains over June skill levels.

For clarification purposes the term regression will be defined as a reversion to a lower level of skill performance. Recoupment will be defined as compensation or regaining of lost skills or skills regressed in, and regression-recoupment time will refer to the amount of time required to regain skills lost or regressed in over a period of time with no instruction. Partial regression will refer to the loss of some skills in assessed areas but not all, and partial regression-recoupment will refer to the regaining of some skills in assessed areas but not all. Total regression-recoupment will refer to the regaining of all skills in all areas assessed. Twelve month programming will be used to delineate any service delivery model that will provide some form of instruction during each month of the year, more particularly for the purpose of this study during the summer months, and trained parents will be used to refer only to those parents who took part in the specific program as outlined.

Review of Legislation, Litigation,
and Literature

Legislation and Litigation Related to Educational Programming
in Excess of 180 Days for Handicapped Students

The first court case to address the issue of educational programming in excess of 180 days was that of Armstrong v. Kline (1979). This case involved three class action lawsuits brought about by five handicapped children and their parents who alleged that because of the nature and severity of their handicapping condition a program of special education and related services in excess of 180 days per year was required. They further alleged that the policy and practice of the Pennsylvania Department of Education of refusing to provide or fund the education of any child in excess of 180 calendar days per year and the instruction to hearing officers that they did not have the authority to and could not order a special education program in excess of 180 days per year violated the handicapped students' rights to a free appropriate public education and adequate procedural safeguards under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The findings of the court were that the 180 day rule precluded the plaintiffs from receiving an education that would permit them to reach their reasonably set education goals with respect to self-sufficiency, the key being self-sufficiency with eligibility being based upon a regression-recoupment disability.

The Armstrong v. Kline decision was appealed in Battle v. Commonwealth (1980); however, the district courts decision that the Department of Education's 180 day rule violates PL 94-142 was upheld. The court of appeals also agreed that the definition of a free appropriate public education was the center of the controversy. The appellate court did not agree with the district court's setting of self-sufficiency as the ultimate goal for said handicapped students but rather that reasonable educational goals and programs for reaching these goals should be set through the individualized education program and should be subject to review by hearing officers, courts, and federal authorities, the key being the individualized education program rather than self-sufficiency.

GARC v. McDaniel (1981) was a class action lawsuit filed by the Georgia Association for Retarded Citizens, Russell Caine, a profoundly retarded child, and Russell's parents against the State Superintendent of Schools, State Board of Education, and individual board members as well as the Savannah-Chatham County Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education, and individual board members. The plaintiffs contended that the defendants had policies of refusing to consider the needs of mentally retarded students for educational terms in excess of 180 days. They further contended that Russell Caine and other identified members of the class had shown a need for this additional schooling but that the defendants had refused to provide it violating the rights of the plaintiffs under the

Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Section 504. The defendants held that they did not have such a policy or practice, that a need for schooling in excess of 180 days had not been shown, and further that the Education for All Handicapped Children Act did not require the provision of more than 180 days of schooling. The findings of the court were that the plaintiffs had not satisfactorily demonstrated a need for any particular profoundly or severely mentally retarded student to be provided schooling in excess of 180 days but that an across the board policy prohibiting the consideration of a student's needs beyond 180 days did violate the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The court reasoned that the Education for All Handicapped Children Act required an individual determination of a student's educational needs in order to provide an appropriate education. Eligibility in this instance appeared to be based on all mentally retarded who demonstrated regression and who needed additional programs to prevent this. This case has been appealed; however, a decision has not yet been rendered.

Literature Related to Educational Programs in Excess of 180

Days Per Year

The topic of a free appropriate public education as it relates to programming in excess of 180 days has been discussed for some time. Some have surmised that while extended school year programs can at times increase students' skill levels the true impact of such programs on student performance could only

be measured at the end of the next school year (Edgar et al., 1977). Others reported that interruption in school programming during the summer months posed serious obstacles to learning for those profoundly and severely handicapped children who demonstrated a regression-recoupment disability and that public schools had an obligation to identify such students and provide programs suited to their needs (Larsen et al., 1981). Bahling (Note 1) reported a lack of regression in students between June and August when an extended school year was implemented.

The administrative discussion seems to revolve around the question of exactly what constitutes a free appropriate education and what is the role of the school in serving the needs of all children (McCarthy, 1980). According to a survey of opinions reported in the courts, appropriate education may exceed the standards of a minimally adequate education and may include year-round programs (Stotland & Mancuso, 1981); however, none of the courts that have decided special education issues have yet defined an appropriate education but rather have recognized the need to redefine the purpose of education if all handicapped children are to be provided with such (Leonard, 1981). In direct opposition Makuch (1981) took the position that Public Law 94-142 is not the appropriate vehicle for guaranteeing free appropriate human services to all handicapped people and their families to include year-round special education. The courts, however, have clearly indicated that denial of 12 month programming as a blanket policy is a violation of PL 94-142's

mandate for a free appropriate education and that systems must begin to look at 12 month service delivery models on the basis of individual need.

Literature Related to the Importance of Parental Involvement
in the Education Process of the Handicapped Student

Much of the literature strongly emphasized the necessity of parental involvement in the IEP process (McAleer, 1978; Scanlon, Arick, & Phelps, 1981; Turnbull, Strickland, & Goldstein, 1978; Winslow, 1977); however, parent involvement should extend even beyond this. Teachers can no longer underestimate the parent's ability to use appropriate teaching and behavior management techniques in the home (Blackard & Barsh, 1982) and must realize the need to educate the entire family unit to effect change in the child (Stock & Fine, 1978). Mattson (1977) emphasized that maximizing parent involvement in their handicapped child's education must be the goal for all special educators and that teachers must make active parent involvement happen if transfer and generalization of skills are to occur. Bates, Renzaglia, and Wehman (1981) indicated family involvement to be a primary characteristic of an appropriate education for the severely and profoundly handicapped citing an across environmental approach in instructional programming as the major reason. In summation of the major importance of family involvement Hill, Wehman, and Horst (1982) emphasized that a major limitation of any program involves lack of intervention with the family members who are ultimately responsible for maintaining newly acquired behaviors.

Literature Related to Effective Implementation of Educational Programs for Handicapped Students by Parents

The importance of parental involvement established, the question of whether or not parents can effectively implement educational programs in the home presents itself. Bricker and Casuso (1979) proposed that parents could be effective change agents with their handicapped child. Jenkins, Stephens, and Sternberg (1980) affirmed that through appropriate home instruction parents could positively influence their child's development. Many examples of this positive influence can be found in the literature. Haley and Bowers (1977) described a successful summer program. Filler and Kasari (1981) reported that through training in task analysis, mothers were able to implement skill training programs in which their child not only acquired the desired response and maintained over time but also generalized responses from home to school. Kissel, Johnson, and Whitman (1980) discussed the success of a structured parent training program in developing a self-feeding response across settings and maintenance and generalized changes in the self-feeding behavior. An unobtrusive training program carried out by parents for the purpose of generalizing responses to the situations and settings to which the child accompanied them is recorded by Weelz, Myers, Klein, Hall, and Waldo (1982). Effective implementation of language programs by parents is also documented (Buckhalt, 1970; Jelinek & Schaub, 1973; Seitz & Hoekenga, 1974; Strom, Rees, Slaughter & Wurster, 1980).

parental effectiveness in the use of behavior modification techniques is evidenced (Heifetz, 1977; Mash & Terdal, 1973; Watson & Bassinger, 1974). Abbott and Sabatino (1975) reported effective visual-motor intervention by parents of handicapped preschoolers and Hanson and Schwarz (1978) on parent's provision of an effective early intervention program for Down's infants. Another effective infant-parent intervention program is documented by Hanson (1976). Successful projects and programs for training parents to become effective program implementers are also noted by McConkey and Jeffree (1975) and Schoenig (1978).

Method

Subjects

Subjects consisted of 15 moderately and severely handicapped students ranging in chronological ages from 2 to 21 years and in developmental ages from 1.5 to 6.0 years based upon the assessment instruments utilized. Six of the students were nonverbal and 3 nonambulatory. One student used manual communication. These 15 subjects comprised 33% of the total school population of the Educational Service Center in Bartow County. These students were selected based upon their parents volunteering to take part in the training program.

Materials

A series of educational assessment was administered. Assessment instruments utilized varied according to the severity of the handicapping condition. The VULPE was administered to those students classified as severely mentally handicapped.

Thirty-three strands of the Behavioral Characteristic Progression were administered to those students classified as moderately mentally handicapped. Due to the noncategorical nature of the preschool program a series of assessment instruments were utilized to include the Uzgirlis-Hunt, the DASI, Preschool Language Scale, the Gestural Approach to Thought and Expression, the Lakeland Village Adaptive Behavior Scale, and the Stanford Motor Assessment. These instruments were designed specifically to look at overall functioning in the areas of cognition, receptive and expressive language, self-help skills, fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and vocational skills.

Design

A control group was selected consisting of 25 moderately and severely handicapped students ranging in chronological ages from 2 to 18 years and in developmental ages from 0.6 to 7.6 years based upon assessment instruments utilized. Seven of the students were nonverbal and 3 nonambulatory. These 25 students comprised 53% of the total school population of the Educational Service Center in Bartow County. The control group was selected based upon the nonparticipation of their parents in the parent training program.

Assessment was administered to both subjects and control group over the 1981-82, 1982-83, and 1983-84 school years. This assessment series consisted of pretest, post test, and follow-up. With the exception of the BCP standard scoring

methods were used for each assessment. The BCP was scored using the VULPE scoring method for the purpose of obtaining more indepth information as to specific level of performance. Students, assessors, and assessment instruments utilized remained the same over the 2 year period for both subjects and control group except in one instance where preassessment 1981-82 was completed by a different teacher and in one instance where pre and post assessment 1981-82 were completed by a different teacher; however, preassessment and follow-up for the 1983-84 school year were administered by the same assessors in nine cases and by different assessors in six cases. All assessment was completed on a one-to-one basis by the students' classroom teacher with assistance from related service providers. The setting for the assessment was the students' classroom or specific environment necessary to perform a certain skill.

Procedure

Using the information obtained from the pre, post, and follow-up assessments of the 1981-82 school year and the pre, post assessment of the 1982-83 school year as the base data, a program of parent training was developed and implemented prior to pre and follow-up assessment 1983. The parent training program was carried out in eight phases with phase one being implemented through the regularly scheduled March 1983 parent meeting. To insure maximum participation all parents were contacted by phone on two ^{occasions} with the director making

the initial contact 1 week prior to the meeting explaining the purpose of the meeting in detail. The classroom teacher made the second phone contact 1 day prior to the meeting as a reminder to the parents. Two contacts by letter were made during the interim period. Transportation was furnished if necessary, and a nursery was provided. The agenda of the parent meeting included an explanation of regression-recoupment followed by a brief simplified review of current legislation and litigation regarding the topic. The regression-recoupment data obtained by the center during the 1981-82 school year was discussed and project posters displayed. An overview of 12 month programming delivery models was given followed by a brief review of the literature regarding the parent training model. The parents were then given an indepth explanation of the proposed training program. Questions were entertained, and parents were asked to commit themselves to the program. Scheduling phase two of the program was done at parental convenience. Parents who did not attend the meeting were again contacted by phone, and a home visit was made as a further attempt to gain participation.

Phase two of the training program took place in April 1983. This phase consisted of a 2 hour training session in which the parent was instructed in the basic interaction pattern, basic behavior management techniques, and basic data collection procedures. This training session was repeated in the evening for parents who could not attend the day session.

Parents who wanted an opportunity for more practice were invited to attend both sessions.

Phase three of the parent training program was also implemented in April. This phase consisted of the development of the student's summer program. Using the information obtained from the previous regression-recoupment project as a guide, the director, teacher, therapist, and other related service providers held a conference with the parent to select critical objectives geared to self-sufficiency and covering all curriculum areas that might be considered high risk for regression-recoupment disability. The team then developed a data collection system for the parent that included a task analysis of the behavior or objective, exact written procedures for implementation, materials needed, and levels of performance. Actual time to be spent on the program was decided at this point.

Phase four of the program involved in-school training and took place in May. The parent came into the classroom and observed the instructional process as it was carried out by the teacher or therapist. This took place over two instructional periods. The third instructional period involved the parents carrying out the instructional procedures with the student. This session was repeated if problems arose or if the parent was not comfortable with the procedures. Any questions, problems, or modifications of the program were made at this time.

Phase five was the actual summer phase of the program with the parent carrying out the instructional plan in the

home setting. Contact was made with the parent on a weekly basis to determine progress and discover possible problems. If a problem existed, a visit was made to the home where an observation of instruction took place and suggestions for and necessary revisions of the program were made. If no problems were reported, one observational visit was scheduled to the home during the summer instructional period.

Upon re-entry into school in August the sixth phase of the program began. Conferences were scheduled with parents, teachers, therapist, and director at which the parent discussed the summer program's effectiveness. Problems and successes were reviewed: transfer and generalization of skills and data collection were noted. The data collection was then added to that of the teacher. Program continuation and home follow-through were discussed.

In September phase seven of the program began with students being assessed with exactly the same instruments as were previously used. Variables remained as consistent as possible. After this assessment was completed results were graphed and information shared with parents. Regression areas were noted, and programming for recoupment began with the teacher using standard instructional procedures.

The final phase of the program was reassessment in the areas of regression completed at the end of the first 6 weeks of school as this was commensurate with the amount of time spent in the regular classroom reviewing materials learned before

summer break. Regression-recoupment was noted and graphed and results shared with parents. A comparison was made of regression and regression-recoupment time between students whose parents participated in the training and those whose parents did not. Results were shared at the November parent meeting with trained parents sharing their opinion of program effectiveness.

Results

The findings of this study showed that with parent training as a 12 month service delivery model some students still regressed; however, regression was less than that over the previous summer with no parental intervention and less than that of the control group both in terms of number of areas regressed in and range of regression. Regression was most widespread among both groups in the cognitive area only 2 subjects showed regression in areas of parental intervention.

When compared to the control group and to themselves over the previous summer with no intervention, subjects showed a larger percentage of regression-recoupment by the end of the first 6 weeks. Some subjects showed recoupment of lost skills and gains in other areas over fall pretest scores. The area showing most delay in regression-recoupment was self-identification.

Subjects showed more and wider gains over June skill levels when compared to both the previous summer with no parental intervention and to the control group. Gains were widespread across all areas but specifically those of parental intervention.

Three students gained in areas regressed in over the previous summer. One student regressed in some areas at the same time making gains in others. Gains were more prevalent among preschoolers.

About the same percentage of subjects and control group showed scores that remained the same as June skill levels on the fall pretest. Scores of older students showed more stability.

Two students had objectives dealing with stereotypic and self-injurious behavior. One student's head-hitting behavior showed a decrease over the summer with parental intervention. One student's neck-pressing behavior showed no increase or decrease but remained inconsistent.

Discussion

The data presented supports the finding that 12 month service delivery can at times increase student's skill levels (Edgar et al., 1977) and that a lack of regression in students between June and August can be seen when an extended school year is implemented as found by Bahling (note 1). The data presented also supports the hypothesis that parent training as a 12 month service delivery model can be effective in reducing regression and regression-recoupment time and can bring about gains over June skill levels. In most cases parents were effective program implementers and seemed to be most effective in bringing about gains. In the instances where parents did not effectively implement the summer program lack of actually carrying out the program and lack of understanding as to what

should be done were found to be primary factors.

Difficulty in controlling all variables was the major problem of this study. Subjects were selected based on their parents willingness to participate in the training program resulting in a larger number of students in the control group. Volunteering parents were also more highly educated. Changes of class rolls and teachers over the 2 year period made comparisons difficult; therefore, group data yields more valid information. The nature of the assessment instruments themselves sometimes created a lack of clarity in the results. The VULPE tended to yield greater gains and regression scores than did the BCP, and due to the many areas assessed it was possible to show gains and regression at the same time. The concentration of preschool subjects tended to weight the results in that with one exception all preschoolers showed gains: older students showed more stability. Positive attitudinal difference appeared to be present on the part of preschool parents as well.

While data in this case appears to support parent training as an effective 12 month service delivery model, a comparison with other possible service delivery models such as in-school service delivery, cooperative agreements with other agencies, shared services, and homebound services would seem in order. Furthermore the courts have indicated a need to make the determination of need for an extended year program on an individual basis; therefore, a look at this determination process is necessary.

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